

## Thinking of Breeding?

Having a litter from your bitch can be very rewarding. However, most people don't realise it can also be very time consuming, expensive, and messy. If you are thinking of breeding from your bitch because puppies are cute or because you think you can make some money then think again, there is a lot to consider!

Before mating your bitch you should take into consideration the following:

- Can you afford any recommended health tests for the bitch prior to mating or for the litter if necessary? See The Kennel Club website for details: [www.thekennelclub.org.uk](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk)
- Do you have the time and space to devote a litter of puppies which would need to be kept at your premises until 8 weeks of age?
- Would you be able to afford the cost of a caesarean if it was needed or 'Out of Hours' fees if something went wrong? The average cost of a caesarean is approximately £1200 but can be higher! Even if you qualify for treatment at charities such as the PDSA, they will not usually cover the cost for a caesarean
- Do you have enough knowledge to be able to help the bitch with delivery of the puppies? Lack of knowledge could put not only the puppies' lives in danger, but also mum's life.
- Would you be able to hand feed puppies every 2 hours day and night if anything happened to the mother meaning she was unable to do so, or if she rejected the puppies?
- Would you be able to cope with the mess that a litter of puppies can make, especially if it was a large litter of 10 or more pups? Mum will usually only clean up after the pups for the first few weeks.
- Do you have enough knowledge of nutrition, worming and socialisation to be able to raise a litter successfully?
- Do you have the knowledge to be able to provide new owners with support/advice for the lifetime of the puppy?
- Do you have the space and finances to be able to keep any puppies that you cannot find homes for?
- As the breeder of the puppies you are responsible for re-homing or taking back the puppies/adults if the new home is unable to keep the dog. Would you have the space to do so?

If you are unable to answer yes to ALL of the above, then breeding from your bitch might not be a good idea.

Also it is important to take into account the following:

- A bitch should 2 years old before she produces her first litter
- A bitch should ideally have her first litter before she is 4 years old
- A bitch should NEVER have more than one litter within 12 calendar months
- A bitch should NOT have more than 4 litters in her lifetime
- A bitch should ideally NOT be bred from after the age of 6 years old